



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

NSF 11-056

Dear Colleague Letter: The Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences

Beginning in 2011, the Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences in the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) will initiate new procedures, on a trial basis, for the submission and review of research proposals. BIO seeks to improve the efficiency with which it processes proposals while maintaining the highest quality of merit reviews and funding selections. The goal of these new procedures is to better manage proposal processing in the face of increasing numbers of proposals, to reduce the growing burden on the PI and reviewer community, and to improve funding rates.

As noted in the 2007 IPAMM Report¹, both the number of proposals submitted to NSF per year and the number of research proposals submitted per PI has increased substantially. A significant number of NSF reviewers surveyed for the IPAMM Report indicated that overall reviewer workload had increased in the preceding three years. If anything, the intervening years have only increased both the proposal submission rate and the resulting burden on the reviewer community.

In response to this growing problem, the Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences is revising its procedures for submission and review of research proposals. The Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences (MCB) will implement an eight month cycle for proposal submission in order to give the PIs of declined proposals additional time for revision. Deadlines for full proposal submission will be: September 6, 2011, May 21, 2012 and January 28, 2013. In addition, the number of full proposals submitted per 8-month cycle by an investigator will be restricted to one proposal as a PI or co-PI. Full details about these changes can be found in the new Program Solicitation "Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences: Investigator-initiated research projects" ([NSF 11-545](#)) posted on the Division's web site. A set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about these changes also can be found on the Division web site.

EAGERS, RAPIDs, and conference/workshop proposals will continue to be accepted at any time. [Research at Undergraduate Institutions](#) (RUI) and [Research Coordination Networks](#) (RCN) proposals targeted to MCB should be submitted by the Division deadlines listed above. Special activities such as CAREER will continue to be governed by their own solicitations, and are NOT affected by the changes described above. Supplement requests should be submitted by February 15 to be considered for funding in the same fiscal year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joann Roskoski
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Directorate for Biological Sciences

¹Impact of Proposal and Award Management Mechanisms (IPAMM) Final Report (August 1, 2007; <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2007/nsf0745/nsf0745.pdf>); National Science Foundation